

REMARKS

In the February 23, 2006 Office Action, the Examiner noted that claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12-14, 16-19, 21-23, 25-27, 29-31 and 33-39 were pending in the application and were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a). In rejecting the claims, U.S. Patents 6,381,583 to Kenney (Reference A in the January 26, 2005, Office Action); 6,014,638 to Burge et al. (Reference A in the November 19, 2003, Office Action); and 6,396,509 to Cheng (Reference A in the February 23, 2006 Office Action) were cited. Claims 4, 12, 21 and 29 have been canceled and thus, claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8-10, 13, 14, 16-19, 22, 23, 25-27, 30, 31 and 33-39 remain in the case. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

On pages 3-10 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12-14, 16-19, 21-23, 25-27, 29-31 and 33-38 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kenney in view of Burge et al. and further in view of Cheng. The independent claims included in this rejection, i.e., claims 1, 9, 18, 26 and 35, have been amended to recite details of how "a message inputted by said user" (e.g., original claim 4) is used in determining "as action data, weights of items of content that are of interest for respective categories to said user" (e.g., claim 1, lines 23-24). Specifically, claims 1, 9, 18, 26 and 35 now recite "extracting a keyword from the message inputted by said user" (e.g., claim 1, lines 22-23), so that the weights can be determined "in relation to the extracted keyword" (e.g., claim 1, line 27). An example of this process can be found at page 10, lines 5-24; page 11, lines 5-9 and Figs. 3A and 3B.

In rejecting claim 4, it was asserted that Burge et al. discloses

- ✓ Profile data for the shopper (i.e., user data) 16 is stored in a User Profile Database 18. Profile data may also include personal data and details (e.g., age, sex) provided by the shopper when joining or subscribing to the service. This personal information may also be stored in the User Profile Database 18

(Burge et al., column 7, lines 1-6). It is submitted that defining a user profile as taught by Burge et al. is not equivalent to "a message inputted by ... [a] user" as previously recited in claim 4. To further clarify the difference, claims 1, 9, 18, 26 and 35 now recite "the message of said avatar being inputted by said user while said avatar is talking with a different avatar in said first virtual reality scene" (e.g., claim 1, lines 18-19). There is no suggestion of such an activity involving "a different avatar" in the storage of information in a user profile. The profile data stored by the system taught by Burge et al. is provided by the shopper when joining or subscribing to the service and hence, is rather static data. However, a shopper's interest may vary for each visit.

As now more clearly recited in independent claims 1, 9, 18, 26 and 35, the present invention performs analysis on actions and communication of an avatar in a virtual reality scene to determine the interest of the user who controls the avatar and inputs a message for a different avatar in the virtual reality scene. Nothing has been cited or found in Kenney, Burge et al. and Cheng, taken individually or in combination, that teaches or suggests determining interests of a user in the manner recited in independent claims 1, 9, 18, 26 and 35, so that "a second three-dimensional virtual reality scene" (e.g., claim 1, lines 28-29) can be provided from the action data determined based on the analysis of actions and the message (see, e.g., claim 1, last 6 lines).

For the above reasons, it is submitted that claims 1, 9, 18, 26 and 35, as well as claims 2, 4-6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 17, 19, 21-23, 25, 27, 29-31, 33, 34 and 36-38 which depend therefrom patentably distinguish over Kenney, Burge et al. and Cheng.

On pages 10-12 of the Office Action, claim 39 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kenney in view of Cheng. Claim 39 has been amended to recite "determining an extent to which a specific virtual object in the three-dimensional virtual reality scene is of interest to the user by analyzing a history of interactions of a user avatar and virtual objects ... and input of a message by the user in communicating with another avatar" (claim 39, lines 3-7) and "modifying the three-dimensional virtual reality scene so that the specific virtual object is presented within the three-dimensional virtual reality scene according to the extent of interest in the specific virtual object by the user" (claim 39, last 5 lines). Nothing has been cited or found in Kenney, Burge et al. and Cheng, taken individually or in combination, that teaches or suggests determining interests of a user in the manner recited in claim 39 for the purpose of modifying a virtual reality scene in accordance with the interests of the user. Therefore, it is submitted that claim 39 not only distinguishes over Kenney in view of Cheng, but also when the teachings of Burge et al. are included.

Summary

It is submitted that the references cited by the Examiner do not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention. Thus, it is submitted that claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8-10, 13, 14, 16-19, 22, 23, 25-27, 30, 31 and 33-39 are in a condition suitable for allowance. Reconsideration of the claims and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Serial No. 09/840,151

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 6/22/06

By: Richard A. Gollhofer
Richard A. Gollhofer
Registration No. 31,106

1201 New York Avenue, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501